



Office of the Mayor
607-334-1201

March 3, 2014

Thomas Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Re: Support for Southern Tier East Planning Development Board application to Rural Broadband Trial Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Members of the Commission:

I am pleased to write on behalf of the City of Norwich expressing interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Trial Connect America Fund program recently announced by the FCC. Please know that the City of Norwich and Chenango County are very much in need of high-speed Internet service. Only limited broadband service currently exists in our community, which puts our area at a disadvantage for attracting and retaining major employers. Therefore, I respectfully request that the Federal Communications Commission consider our area's need when making decisions regarding the Rural Broadband Trials program and any future initiatives related to the Connect America Fund.

Background

The city of Norwich is the county seat of Chenango County and is located about forty-five miles north of Binghamton, NY, and about forty-five miles south of Utica, NY. Norwich has a population of slightly more than 7,000 residents, declining from a high of 9,000 inhabitants in 1960. Norwich has a small SUNY extension campus, serving about 400 students, and is the home of NBT Bank, which has a growing regional presence in a four-state area. Chenango County is also home to Chobani yogurt, Raymond Corporation, Norwich Pharmaceuticals, and Golden Artist Colors.

Geographic Territory

While Norwich and Chenango County are geographically well positioned to serve the metropolitan markets of the northeast, the area might also be described as "fly over" country. Improving the county's access to broadband service, particularly along the north-south axis of NYS Route 12, would greatly enhance the area's 21st century competitiveness.

Proposed technology

Since the area's broadband access is largely limited to one cable provider, residents and businesses are forced to pay a premium for service substantially higher than other areas of the United States. In order to prepare for the "next generation" of technologies, we would like to see the minimum of one gigabyte per second of download capacity. We are looking for affordable options, such as fiber-to-the-home or fiber to a central hub, and wireless from that point to the end-user. This will enable Chenango County residents, business owners, and students to have the same internet access advantages as other communities in the United States and at a similar cost for service.

Existing Providers

Time Warner Cable is the only broadband provider in the Chenango County area. Frontier Communications offers DSL service. Cable services for television, phone, and internet are typically about \$150 per month, which is believed to be considerably higher than most other areas of the US.

Local or Tribal Government Participation

The City of Norwich anticipates that a number of business, education, healthcare, and governmental entities would be interested in working with Southern Tier East Regional Planning Development Board to bring an open-access, middle-mile fiber ring through our region. To build such infrastructure, would allow last-mile service providers to expand at a feasible cost and provide the telephone, internet, data and television services we are lacking.

List of Anchor Institutions

The following anchor institutions will be greatly assessed by the expansion of high-speed internet in Chenango County.

Schools: Norwich Campus of Morrisville State College, DCMO BOCES, 9 school districts within Chenango County.

Libraries: Guernsey Memorial Library and the county library system.

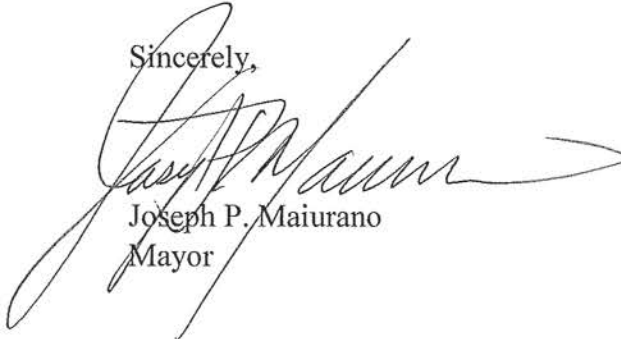
Healthcare: UHS Chenango Memorial Hospital and Bassett Healthcare System

City offices: Police, fire, emergency response, department of works, City Hall.

Community Centers: Norwich YMCA, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and to express interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Trials. I look forward to the possibility of working to improve high-speed internet access for the Norwich and Chenango County area.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Maiurano
Mayor